

Submitted Questions with Answers

**1. Question:** Is the current contractor providing service under the ECC contract qualified to compete for this contract as a prime? I would also like to know the name of the current contractor(s).

**Answer:** It is the USPTO's understanding that Systems Integration, Inc. (SII), the incumbent contractor, has graduated from SBA's 8(a) program. Also see Section L.7, titled "Incumbent Contractor", of the RFP.

**2. Question:** My employer would like to know the following information about the incumbent contract, 50-PAPT-3-01012 with Systems Integration, Inc.: Estimated Contract Value, and Period of Performance (start and end dates).

**Answer:** Estimated Contract Value, under \$3,000,000.00. Period of performance of contract: From April 17, 2003 through July 31, 2005.

**3. Question:** Can you tell me what the value of the current contract is, and when it was awarded?

**Answer:** See the answer to question number 2.

**4. Question:** Can you tell the name of the company that currently holds the contract?

**Answer:** See section L.7 of the RFP titled "Incumbent Contractor".

**5. Question:** How difficult is it to become an authorized partner in the I3 Partner Program?

**Answer:** Please contact Steve Kaplan of Interactive Intelligence, Inc. (I3) at (317) 715-8145.

**6. Question:** Are there or will there be any experience requirements that would or will be used as a discriminating factor?

**Answer:** See section L.4 of the RFP titled "Proposal Requirements", specifically L.4.A.5 titled "Offeror's experience/viability/corporate and financial resources".

**7. Question:** In providing the certified and experienced personnel to support the I3 Customer Interaction Center (CIC) software and provide certified Stratus support:

- (a) Are there varying levels of experience requirements for the personnel?
- (b) Recent and consecutive experience limitations for the personnel?
- (c) Limited to company experience or can the procurement requirement be satisfied by just having the certified personnel experience.
- (d) Size Standard range?

**Answer for (a) and (b):** See section L.4.A.3 of the RFP titled "Offeror's Experience Level of Proposed Staff". See Amendment 0001.

**Answer for (c):** See section L.4.A. 3 and 5.

**Answer for (d):** See section K.7, clause 52.219-1 SMALL BUSINESS PROGRAM REPRESENTATIONS (APR 2002).

**8. Question:** Is there a requirement for an office location within a 50 mile radius of the Crystal City, VA and Alexandria, VA locations etc?

**Answer:** No. However, Offerors are reminded that the successful Offeror under the resulting contract will have to meet the performance standards in section C.3.6 of the RFP as well as any performance standards in the Offeror's proposed Quality Assurance Surveillance Plan that will be incorporated into the resulting contract.

**9. Question:** Please clarify # of copies for technical and cost proposals -- SF33 says "original and 6 copies" and Section L states "one (1) original and three (3) copies".

**Answer:** Offerors are required to submit one (1) original and three (3) copies each of Volume 1, Technical Proposal, and Volume 2, Price Proposal, as stated in Section L.4 of the RFP. See Amendment 0001.

**10. Question:** Please confirm what materials and equipment will need to be furnished by the contractor for the onsite support of the Enterprise Contact Center.

**Answer:** In accordance with section C.3.12 of the RFP titled “Acquisition of Software, Equipment, Services and Supplies”, the contractor must furnish its own general office equipment other than that directly related to a specific ECC system development application. In addition, the successful Offeror may be directed to procure materials and equipment specifically pertaining to the ECC System including, but not limited to, the items described in section C.3.12, subparagraphs (a) through (e) of the RFP via delivery orders issued under the resulting contract. Finally, Offerors are reminded that section L.4.B.(1) of the RFP states “Labor rates shall be costed as ‘Off-Site’ with the Offeror providing space, equipment, supplies, and any other resources necessary to provide support under the resulting contract”.

**11. Question:** Section F.2 – Period of Performance. The Base Period of the contract is defined as “Effective date of contract through September 30, 2005”. Please provide the anticipated start date/effective date to be used for pricing purposes OR the anticipated duration of the base period (e.g. number of months).

**Answer:** The anticipated award date/start date of the resulting contract is estimated to be April of 2005.

**12. Question:** Section F.7 – Government Holidays and Section C.3.6.2 – On-Call Support. Please clarify whether or not these support activities include Federal Holidays.

**Answer:** On call support shall cover all hours and days, 7 days a week and 365 days a year, not covered during the on-site hours specified in section C.3.6.1. See Amendment 0001.

**13. Question:** Section B.4 – Cost/Prices and Attachment 1 - Section B Schedule of Prices. The Government has provided estimated labor hours in Attachment “1”. Please clarify whether or not the proposed total number of hours should be distributed and applied to the proposed fully burdened hourly labor categories that is, shall the Offeror break out the hours by proposed labor category to equal the RFP specified hours?

**Answer:** Yes.

**14. Question:** Section J. List of Attachments. Attachment “6” – Table of Financial Ratios. The Government has requested the inclusion of Attachment 6 Financial Ratios, as well as all supporting calculations and work to be included in the Technical/Management Plan, and therefore subject to the 30-page limit. We note that such financial information is normally incorporated into the price volume and therefore would not be included into the 30 page limitation. Would the Government consider moving Attachment 6 and supporting material to the Price Volume?

**Answer:** The Technical Proposal shall not exceed a total of thirty (30) pages in length (not including the following RFP Attachments: “1” through “4” and Attachment “5” (with its supporting material) (Attachment “5” was previously labeled Attachment “6”)). The USPTO will not move Attachment “5” Table of Financial Ratios (previously labeled Attachment “6”) , from the Technical Proposal to the Price Proposal. See Amendment 0001.

**15. Question:** Section: L.4.A.6 - The Government has limited the Technical/Management Plan to 30 pages with a significant amount of material required. Would the Government consider the Quality Assurance Surveillance Plan as an appendix and not included in the 30 page limitation?

**Answer:** The Offeror’s proposed Quality Assurance Surveillance Plan **will** count toward the Technical Proposal’s total page limitation of thirty (30) pages in length.

**16. Question:** Section: L.4.A.3 –The Government has required a signed letter of commitment that states the fully burdened labor rate the employee has agreed to work for. This information is proprietary and not shared with employees. Typically, offer letters or letters of commitment state a direct hourly or annual salary rate. Would the Government change the requirement to reflect the direct hourly or salary rate for each proposed employee?

**Answer:** Letters of commitment submitted by offerors required under section L.4.3 of the RFP can state **either** the fully burdened labor rate or the direct hourly rate that the employee has agreed to work for. In either case, the fully burdened labor rate must be included in Attachment “1” to the RFP as well as contained in the Offerors Price Proposal. In accordance with section L.4.B, the Offeror’s Price Proposal should also show the components (direct and indirect) that make up the proposed fully burdened labor rates. See Amendment 0001.

**17. Question:** Section L.4.A.3 – The RFP specifically states that the resumes and past performance references are excluded from the 30-page count, can we assume that the commitment letters are similarly excluded? Further, as the commitment letters are to contain pricing information (e.g., salaries), which is typically excluded from the Technical Proposal, we request that you include the letters in the Price Proposal instead of the Technical Proposal.

**Answer:** Letters of commitment submitted by offerors required under section L.4.3 of the RFP shall be submitted with the Price Proposal and, therefore, will not count toward the Technical Proposal’s total page limitation. See Amendment 0001.

**18. Question:** Section L.5 – May we use 8pt fonts for tables and graphics?

**Answer:** No, in accordance with section L.5 of the RFP, the font for all proposal documents submitted shall be Times New Roman 12 pt.

**19. Question:** Section L.5 – Will foldouts (11x17) count as one page or two?

**Answer:** Foldouts (11x17) will count as two pages against the total Technical Proposal page limit. See Amendment 0001.

**20. Question:** Section L.5 – The pdf copy is to be formatted for 8.5”x 11” paper. If foldouts (11” x 17”) are used, how should they be formatted in the file?

**Answer:** They should be formatted for 11”x17”, landscape, 12 pt type. See Amendment 0001.

**21. Question:** Section C.5.3 - The Government has required the Program Manager to have PMP certification. Will the Government allow work experience to be substituted for the certification?

**Answer:** See Amendment 0001.

**22. Question:** Section L.4 – Price Proposal – In the absence of DCAA negotiated direct and indirect rates, the Government is requiring year-end actual direct and indirect rates for the company’s most recent completed fiscal year. Since this is a competitive Time and Materials solicitation, will the Government remove the requirement.

**Answer:** No.

**23. Question:** Section L.5 Attachments – Since the Government-supplied forms for resumes and past performance references are uneditable pdf files, will the Government accept MS Office formatted versions of these attachments?

**Answer:** The USPTO will **not** accept MS Office formatted version **recreations** of Attachment “3”, Past Performance Questionnaire or Attachment “4”, Personnel Resume Worksheet. The USPTO has posted the MS Word files of Attachment “3”, Past Performance Questionnaire and Attachment “4”, Personnel Resume Worksheet on the ECC home page of the USPTO Business Opportunities Website at <http://www.uspto.gov/web/offices/ac/comp/proc/enterprise/enterhom.html>. These MS Word files may be used for submittal of the Past Performance Questionnaires and the Personnel Resume Worksheets with the Offeror’s proposal. However, if the MS Word files are used by the Offeror, the general format, size type, margins and number of pages cannot be modified from the original file. In addition, each submitted Past Performance Questionnaire must contain an **original** signature in the signature block.

**24. Question:** Based on the I3 and Stratus certification requirements listed in the solicitation (section C.4.1, page 18), did USPTO conduct any analysis of the cost implications for an 8(a) company to acquire the certifications for this opportunity?

**Answer:** The USPTO did conduct an analysis of the cost implications for an 8(a) company to acquire the certifications for this opportunity. See Amendment number 0001 which modifies section C.4 of the RFP.

**25. Question:** The cost implications to acquire the required certifications for this opportunity are substantial. Did USPTO conduct a market research survey to ascertain how many eligible 8(a) companies have the qualification to meet the requirements of this opportunity? If so, when?

**Answer:** The USPTO issued a Request For Information in April 2004 to conduct market research for the re-competition of USPTO's ECC requirement. In June of 2004, USPTO conducted further market research into this requirement. In July of 2004, the USPTO informed the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) of its inability to find any companies in SBA's 8(a) program that had Interactive Intelligence Incorporated (I3) and/or Stratus certification. The SBA investigated our claim and informed the USPTO that interested 8(a) companies could readily receive the required certifications and would most likely hire personnel that had already been trained and certified in the required areas. In addition, I3 informed the USPTO on 1/14/04 that there are currently three (3) 8(a) companies that are authorized partners in the I3 partner program.

**26. Question:** Based on research conducted for this opportunity, the Interactive Intelligence Customer Interaction Center (CIC) platform is not a widely used call center application in the industry. In addition, the combination of years of experience with the I3 platform and certification requirements (section C.5.3, page 22) alludes to the idea that this opportunity can only be fulfilled by the incumbent, Interactive Intelligence, Inc., Stratus Technologies, or a combination of the three. How does USPTO anticipate mitigating this so there is a fair opportunity for any other 8(a) contractors to pursue this requirement?

**Answer:** It is the USPTO's understanding that **none** of the three companies mentioned in your question, the incumbent (SII), I3 and Stratus, are currently certified in SBA's 8(a) program. Therefore, none of these three companies are eligible to receive award of the contract resulting from RFP DOC-52-PAPT-05-01006. In addition, as stated in the answer to question number 2 above, the SBA informed the USPTO that interested 8(a) companies could readily receive the required certifications and would most likely hire personnel that had already been trained and certified in the required areas.

**27. Question:** Is the 8A set aside strictly limited to 8A or can small businesses apply?

**Answer:** RFP DOC-52-PAPT-05-01006 is an 8(a) set-aside, competitive procurement. According to the Small Business Administration (SBA), only companies officially certified by the SBA as 8(a) can submit a proposal in response to this RFP.

**28. Question:** Can a small business entity currently in the 8A application process, respond. The plan is to have the certification completed prior to award.

**Answer:** See the answer to question number 27.

**29. Question:** The RFP response deadline seems to be very aggressive. Is there a reason for the short fuse, considering the RFP just came out on 12/23?

**Answer:** The standard response time for submission of proposals under a competitively awarded RFP is 30 days from the date of release of the RFP. The original closing date for RFP DOC-52-PAPT-05-01006 exceeds 30 days. In addition, the RFP closing date is extended under Amendment 0001.